

## Development of a Mindfulness-Based Coping Skills Training Package for Cancer and Its Effectiveness on Reducing Stress, Blood Cortisol Levels, and Psychological Self-Efficacy in Women with Breast Cancer in Bandar Abbas (A Mixed-Methods Study)

Shirin. Karimpour<sup>1</sup>, Kobra. Haji Alizadeh<sup>2\*</sup>, Eghbal. Zarei<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Health Psychology, Ki.C, Islamic Azad University, Kish, Iran

<sup>2</sup> Department of Psychology, B.A.C., Islamic Azad University, Bandar Abbas, Iran

<sup>3</sup> Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Hormozgan, Bandar Abbas, Iran

\* Corresponding author email address: Hajializadeh@iau.ac.ir

---

### E d i t o r

Azizuddin Khan  
Professor, Psychophysiology  
Laboratory, Department of  
Humanities and Social Sciences  
Indian Institute of Technology  
Bombay, Maharashtra, India  
aziz@hss.iitb.ac.in

### R e v i e w e r s

**Reviewer 1:** Thseen Nazir

Professor of Psychology and Counseling Department, Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul, Turkey.

Email: thseen.nazir@ihu.edu.tr

**Reviewer 2:** Zahra Yousefi

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Isfahan Branch (Khorasgan), Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran. Email: Z.yousefi1393@khusif.ac.ir

---

### 1. Round 1

#### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The sentence “Beyond the immediate threat to physical health, breast cancer is strongly associated with heightened stress, anxiety, depression, and a diminished quality of life...” could be supported with more recent global epidemiological data (2022–2024) on the psychosocial burden of breast cancer.

The transition into the study aim states, “Therefore, the present study seeks to contribute...” but does not explicitly highlight the novelty of the mixed-methods design. Please emphasize how your qualitative-to-quantitative design is different from earlier studies.

The age range of 20–45 is relatively narrow for breast cancer patients, many of whom are older. Please justify why older patients were excluded, and discuss whether this limits generalizability.

“...encouraging participants to identify one maladaptive behavior (such as denial, avoidance, or social withdrawal) and to replace it with adaptive responses...” – Please explain how replacement was guided and whether structured worksheets or role-plays were used.

The claim that mindfulness “may directly modulate the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal (HPA) axis” is strong. Please moderate this statement or specify that biological mechanisms are inferred rather than directly measured beyond cortisol.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

#### 1.2. *Reviewer 2*

Reviewer:

“While traditional therapeutic methods often emphasize cognitive restructuring, mindfulness-based interventions promote acceptance and awareness...” – This dichotomy may be oversimplified. Please clarify that many CBT-based interventions also incorporate acceptance-based elements and explain how your package goes beyond existing therapies.

“Coping skills training, which emphasizes adaptive responses to stressors, has similarly been validated in healthcare contexts.” – Provide at least one reference specific to breast cancer populations to strengthen the argument, as the cited study focuses on caregivers rather than patients.

The section states, “Box’s M test indicated...not considered problematic given equal group sizes.” This reasoning is correct but would benefit from citing a methodological source (e.g., Tabachnick & Fidell, or Field) to justify this decision statistically.

“These results confirm the multidimensional impact of the intervention...” – This statement is somewhat overgeneralized. Please specify which outcomes support the psychological dimension, which support the physiological dimension, and which support the behavioral dimension.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

## 2. Revised

Editor’s decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.